

The American Teacher

Democracy in Education; Education for Democracy

OFFICIAL ORGAN, THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

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ONE DOLLAR A YEAR

THE PATHOS OF OBEDIENCE

Obedience is a Virtue—

When sprung from Mutual Aid

Obedience is a Vice—

When extorted by Sheer Coercion

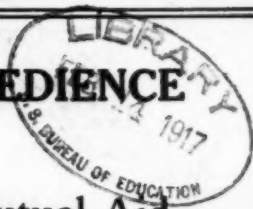
The Soldier who shoots (fearing to disobey)
Is a Butcher

The Workman who scabs (fearing to disobey)
Is a Traitor

The Citizen who evades (fearing to disobey)
Is a Coward

The Teacher who cringes (fearing to disobey)
Is a Public Calamity

As the Modern Scripture Saith:
Yours not to do and die;
Yours but to reason why!



THE TEACHER AND THE UNION*

MAX LOEB

Board of Education, Chicago

THE HUMAN mind works from the particular to the general. If we are waited on by an inefficient clerk in a store, we are apt to conclude that all the clerks in that store are inefficient. If we see in a small city the main street in bad condition on a particular day, we are likely to conclude that such is its condition on all days. If we read an inaccuracy in a newspaper, we conclude a general condition of inaccuracy. Whenever a bank president or a bank cashier absconds, many people withdraw their money from banks; a general condition of distrust is created.

The man in the street falls easily into error of this character. This accounts for the unreasoning opposition in many quarters to the labor movement in the United States. Some employers of labor have come into contact with individual abuses; some have discovered grafters among business agents and labor officials. And immediately, with one far-reaching mental swoop, they have denounced all labor leaders, all business agents, all unions.

Following out the history of the labor movement, considering the many struggles thru which it has passed, the large number of individuals concerned in its activity, it would be incredible indeed if there were not some unworthy members of it, if there were not some cases of abuse, some cases of grafting, some cases of lack of restraint and control. It is the rarity of such cases rather than their number which is the remarkable thing—a rarity which points to the fundamental strength of the labor union movement.

How small a proportion of strikes is that in which violence, lawlessness, has

been a feature? How many have been the strikes, of which the public has known but little, that have not been characterized by physical violence of any kind? Newspapers always feature that which is sensational. A strike which involves law-breaking, assault or destruction of property, attracts much more attention in the public press than does that which is lawfully conducted, well regulated and highly efficient. The many beneficent activities of the labor unions do not excite newspaper attention. The fact that most of the labor officials are elected year after year, and make an honest accounting of their stewardship of the funds entrusted to them by their fellows, is not particularly interesting to the reading public. But let there be one grafter and immediately you see the head lines in the newspapers. A peaceful meeting of a labor union has no news value—but let there be dissension and quarreling and you will read about it in the press. The newspapers are not to be blamed for this, because it is what the public demands. They want not the ordinary, the normal thing, but that which is extraordinary. Unfortunately, in the process of featuring the abnormal they accentuate, by making public, dissensions and differences—enmities are fomented, and thru this process personal bitternesses are engendered, which make further discussion of specific problems difficult and retard rather than aid their successful solution.

Some one has said that if newspapers were published in the time of King Solomon there would be head lines relating to the fact that the wise king had five hundred wives, while the fact that he wrote the Psalms and Proverbs would be given at most a paragraph at the bottom of an inside page.

The members of labor unions in this country are a great army, for the most part law-abiding, peaceful and intelli-

*From address delivered at dinner of American Federation of Teachers, Chicago, December, 1916.

gent. Some of them get into trouble of course—there are some unworthy leaders—there are cases of abuse. These are the chinks in the walls which merely call attention to the intrinsic strength of the structure.

Whenever a friend of mine tells of a grafting labor official I name to him some twenty labor officials of my acquaintance in Chicago who, I know positively, are not grafters. I ask him whether, because one banker went to prison, he would therefore condemn all bank presidents.

The labor movement has been steadily but surely extending its boundaries. It has transcended sex, and women are now a fundamental part of it, less in number but equal in intelligence to the men. For a long time the union movement paused before the gate of government employment, but finally a leader laid down this principle eminently sound: "He who enters public employment does not by that action abate one particle of his rights as a citizen." Since that utterance unions among government employes have extended by leaps and bounds. Here in the city of Chicago we have thirteen organizations of municipal employes, including firemen, janitors, and the like, in organizations affiliated with labor unions. Following is the list:

**MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES BELONGING TO
LABOR UNIONS IN CHICAGO**

Health Officers' Association, No. 14788

Hospital Nurses' and Attendants' Union No. 14655

Firemens' Association No. 12270

Municipal Janitors' Union No. 14782

Meat, Food and Sanitary Science Inspectors' Association, No. 12912 and No. 14623

Park Employes' Union No. 14388

Paving Inspectors' Union No. 14883

Sewer Cleaners' and Repairers' Union No. 10886

Sidewalk Inspectors' Association No. 14771

Federation of Men Teachers No. 14221

Chicago Teachers' Federation No. 14610

Federation of Women High School Teachers No. 14658

All the above are affiliated with the Chicago Federation of Labor.

Note that there are two teachers' organizations affiliated besides the Chicago Teachers' Federation.

The United States Government has specifically recognized (Acts of Congress Approved August 24th, 1912—extending and guaranteeing full rights of Association and Organization to Federal Civil Service Employees) the right of its employes to become members of labor organizations. There are now 10,000 (estimate of Mr. Frank Morrison, Secretary American Federation of Labor) trade unionists employed in the War Department—think of it, in the War Department—there are twelve Unions represented there. There are 16,000 (estimated) members of Labor Unions employed in the Navy Department. There are two strong Unions, both affiliated, in the Post Office Department.

There are altogether estimated to be 200,000 employes of the Federal Government who belong to organizations which are affiliated with labor unions.

The movement was fought at first. The cry of alarm was raised, What if these government employes should strike? As a matter of fact, strikes are more likely to occur where there is no organization, as without it there exists no efficient instrument for the expression of grievances, for the amicable settlement of difficulties and misunderstandings.

Senator Robert M. LaFollette in a memorable speech expressed what to me seems a vital and fundamental truth: *No body of public employes will strike unless their constitutional guarantees are invaded.* What right has anyone to presume that a body of employes will act in an absurd, ridiculous and unpatriotic manner any more than that a municipality, a state or a national government will do so.

As a matter of fact no union of government employes in the United States has ever gone on strike. There have been cases of strikes in postoffices where the employes have not been organized.

Of late years the movement has extended to the teaching profession and again hands have been raised in high horror at the idea. Teaching is a profession—not a trade. These are true words, but professions must organize, must seek strength that their words may be heard abroad in the land. Without the strength that comes from organization they find their wishes disregarded, thwarted, unconsidered.

The Chicago Teachers' Federation has been affiliated with the Chicago Federation of Labor for fourteen years. Concerning the controversy here in Chicago, the public does not know the facts. Disinterested, truth-telling information is needed. An authentic history of the present controversy is yet to be written. It should be done to clear away the mists of misunderstanding and inaccuracy which are befogging the real issues.

Acting is a profession and not a trade—and yet the largest organization of actors has decided, in order that their strength may be increased, that an affiliation is necessary. Writing is a profession and not a trade, and yet at this very time an association of authors is seriously considering affiliation. The teacher does not work with her hands but she does work for a wage—a salary—and in that she is akin to every other person who works for a wage, who has an employer, who meets conditions of work and has necessities and desires which, unless they are given forceful, intelligent expression, do not readily come to the notice of the employer, however beneficent and well-intentioned he may be.

There is a well-defined movement now perceptible among employers to work with unions of their employes—sighting the advantages which come from frank recognition of the benefits

of the union, and the increased efficiency and co-operation which are the results of direct dealing with it. Hart, Schaffner and Marx, a Chicago firm, have in this matter set the pace, and their example is being increasingly followed.

It is said that affiliation interferes with educational efficiency. This *may* be the case, but it is certainly not a necessary condition. Every one of us has many associations which do not and need not interfere at all with the conduct of our daily work.

The notion of a teacher belonging to a union is scouted as a new-fangled idea. It is not new at all. The basis of the association is the preservation and enlargement of human liberty. It is part of a movement as old as time itself—the groping toward greater equality of opportunity—the desire, in-born almost, to make certain and inviolable the fundamental rights of human kind. There is no element of novelty in the idea. It is but another step toward true democracy. Lincoln was moved by it when he freed the slaves. It fired the hearts of Washington and his followers at Valley Forge. Cromwell defying his king, Robert Emmett on the scaffold, Kosciusko at the head of his regiment, Robespierre fanatic but liberty-loving, Luther nailing his proclamation to the church door, Spinoza starving in his garret, Cervantes breaking the bonds of rigid scholasticism, all were moved by this same heart throb for liberty. Whole peoples have felt it—the English wresting Magna Carta from a reluctant monarch at Runnymede—the little band of heroic Greeks at Thermopylae—but it goes further back than that. Christ at Gethsemane, Moses leading the people of Israel out of bondage—all these are gigantic figures in the centuries-old progress of human liberty.

Every movement for greater freedom will have its opponents, must overcome its obstacles, must meet its

defeats. But it will triumph—its progress is invincible.

We live in an age of mechanics and invention. We have found means to drive malaria from the swamps, to fight the locust, the chinch bug and the boll-weevil on our farms; to make transportation safer, to protect society from mishaps, both thru human hands and thru machines. But we have not yet found a way to eliminate the greatest of all evils—human greed. Which one of us is so unselfish that he will give to his employe that which he justly deserves unless he demand it, unless we are compelled to do so? The union stands between this tendency of human nature and its fulfillment; it tends to compel justice, to prevent the division of society into two classes, exploiter and exploited.

I believe the time will come within the next decade when the fact that teachers are affiliated with unions will be a matter of course—something to excite neither interest nor opposition. Personally, I am glad to have a part—no matter how small—in the determination of this issue. I am reminded of a story which I once heard Everett Colby tell, which seems to be appropriate to the situation. Mr. Colby tells of a dinner of patriotic Poles at which many fervent and eloquent speeches were made. At length, one young Polish patriot, with blazing eye and eloquent speech arose and uttered this phrase as the *finis* to his speech: "Where liberty is," he said, "let there be my home," and sat down amid resounding applause. When he had finished another speaker arose—older than the first—wiser in experience. He finished with this sentence: "Where liberty is *not*, let there be my home." Where human rights are imperfectly understood, where the right of association is denied and ignored, there is the place for any of us who would participate, no matter how humbly, in the march of human progress.

Real liberty is to be distinguished from so-called "personal liberty," petty in its scope. Real liberty is that which considers first the welfare of the community. The broader visioned question, "What can we do for the community," must supplant the narrower one, "What can the community do for us."

I am not a total abstainer, for example, but I am willing to give up the satisfaction of a petty personal desire for the greater good. The public is slow to grasp any new conception of freedom, but once grasped it is never yielded. Real fundamentals, such as liberty of speech, liberty of the press, liberty of association, will never be given up. Suffrage has gone forward, not backward. Once adopted it is not surrendered. The direct primary, with all its weaknesses, with all its failures, has never been given up by any state which has adopted it for the old convention system. Why? Because, however imperfect, it is a step towards more democratic participation in public affairs. The same is true of the eight-hour day, evidences of whose progress is all about us—progress which in recent months has been given extraordinary and virile impetus by the National Executive.

There is a danger to be avoided. It is that of over-emphasis, of attention centered on the fight rather than on the teaching. Membership in an organization affiliated with a union should not mean any decay of the professional spirit, any lowering of the standard of teaching. It should be a part of the teacher's life, but only a part, always subordinated to the faithful performance of the duties for which she is receiving compensation. There is nothing inconsistent in membership in such an organization and good teaching. Neither should suffer at the expense of the other.

I am not greatly impressed by the idea of changes in the mechanics of our

educational system. I am willing to try, but I am not enthusiastic about elective boards as compared with appointed boards. I see dangers which salaries and votes for school trustees entail. However, with all the dangers, perhaps a deeper sense of responsibility to the public may be the result. The experiment may well be worth the trying.

What to my mind is much more important is the installation of a scientific system for determining teachers' efficiencies. Such a system has been worked out by a Chicago man, Professor Charles H. Judd. It has been tested, successfully, in Cleveland. The adoption of such a system would mark

a step in educational advancement far more important than changes in the mechanics of boards of education. Regulating the size of classes so that each student receives individual attention is to my mind more important than whether trustees receive no salary or \$500 a year.

The public will gradually get used to the idea of teachers affiliating with unions as they have in the case of other government employees. When they see there is no loss of efficiency, no decay of the professional spirit, the opposition will gradually disappear. Once the point is firmly established, there will be no retreat.

THE PENSION PROBLEM IV.*

PAUL STUDENSKY

Bureau of Municipal Research, New York City

THE PARTLY-CONTRIBUTORY SYSTEM; ITS HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY

THE REALIZATION of the disadvantages of the extreme system (discussed in the previous articles) in which the entire cost of retirement benefits is borne either by the employees alone or by the government alone, resulted in developing a type of system called "partly-contributory," in which the government and the employees share the cost. The taxpayers who favor

the wholly contributory principle and the employees who favor the non-contributory principle usually agree after considerable argument upon the partly-contributory principle as a compromise.

The better to understand the philosophy of the partly-contributory pension a student of the subject must look back into the history of pensions. It would then appear to him in its earliest form as a precursor of social insurance and in its more recent and broader aspect as an expression of principles similar to those now at the base of social insurance. In the XVII and XVIII centuries in Europe pensions were considered as "rewards for faithful service." They were non-contributory of course, no obligation being imposed upon the employees to save and contribute towards their pension. They were granted by the sovereign as an act of grace, not as a matter of the recipient's right, no obligation being imposed upon the sovereign to provide

* This article is the fourth of a series (see Oct., Nov. and Dec. issues) which treat of the fundamental principles of the pension problem that apply generally to all branches of the public service, to teachers, police, firemen, clerks and laborers. In the first article it was stated that retirement systems can be classified according to source of financial support (government or employee) into three types—wholly contributory (supported entirely by the employees themselves); non-contributory (entirely at the expense of the government) and partly-contributory (supported jointly by the employees and the government). The wholly and non-contributory systems were discussed in the second and third articles.

them, and they primarily served the purpose of obtaining supporters and increasing the prestige of the Crown. The employees were considered merely as tools, no one knowing whether or not he would obtain a pension, and their interests were utterly disregarded. With the downfall of the old regime and the rise of democratic government thruout the XIX century a great change in the conception of pensions took place. The discretionary autocratic features yielded before the advance of well-defined principles of efficiency of service as well as of welfare of employees. Benefits essential to their welfare were included in the pension systems and definite *rights to those* benefits were granted the employees, but at the same time also definite responsibilities and obligations were imposed upon them, the most important one being that they should save, insure themselves and contribute a part of the cost towards their own protection. Thus the partly-contributory pension system was established. It made tremendous progress, spreading in private employment as well (the same general pension principles now apply to private and public employment) everywhere defeating the paternalistic non-contributory principle, until at present almost all pension systems abroad belong to the partly-contributory type.

But there the evolution did not stop. Society now realizes that every wage-earner, in public and in private employment, must save and insure himself against the main contingencies of life in order not to be dependent upon others, and that the employer and society at large which benefits from his self-protection should assist him by sharing the cost of his protection. As a result almost every civilized country in the world established for its wage-earners compulsory social insurance systems, in which the

three parties, the wage-earners, the employers and the state jointly contribute.¹ The first systems insured the wage-earners against want in old age. These were closely followed by insurance against sickness and invalidity. Next came life insurance for the benefit of the wage-earner's dependents. Finally, insurance against unemployment was established.

The partly-contributory pension systems and social insurance have continually stimulated each other to a further and broader development. In close connection with social insurance the pension systems are now becoming an important part of a great social reform, the purpose of which, on the one hand, is to combat the evils of unemployment, sickness, disability, old age and death as affecting the wage-earners and their dependents, and on the other hand, to increase the efficiency of their service. For the accomplishment of this purpose the cooperation of all the parties concerned is necessary. What they may be unable to accomplish thru a pension system they may be able to attain thru social insurance, and vice versa.

A pension system is not universal in its application whereas a social insurance system is. Frequently a wage-earner after having been engaged all his life in employments without pension systems enters one which has a system. During the few years before him he must make good his previous failure to contribute to any system. On the other hand the last employer of the retiring employee is penalized as he must bear a considerable expense on account of a pension, a portion of which should have been borne by the employee's previous employers. With respect to this a social insurance system offers a remedy as it makes every employee and every employer contribute to a national fund. But on the other hand, a universal system of social insurance can require only small contributions and can provide only small benefits of nearly universal application, and merely prevent

¹The United States is the only civilized country that has no national system of social insurance.

destitution; whereas a particular system of pensions can require larger contributions and provide benefits more nearly in proportion to the means and standards of living of the particular group of employees and better adapted to raise the efficiency of the particular service. Thus together with social insurance the pension systems continue to develop.

The movement in this country is much more recent of course than the movement abroad. Our pension and social insurance ideas were imported from abroad, our oldest pension systems are only sixty years old and our social insurance is only now beginning. The old and the new pension ideas of Europe which were brought to this country at about the same time, soon found a considerable following here. Frequently the old ideas have posed as new, and the new ideas have passed as old. The confusion becomes distracting when a pension system becomes bankrupt, when sound reorganization is discussed and when an increase of contributions on the part of the government and of the employees is proposed.

Those who have embraced the idea that the pension is a "reward for faithful services" claim that the contributions of employees should be altogether abolished. They think that they are furthering the cause of a "real" pension, and they do not realize that they are engaged in the hopeless task of trying to revive the dying pension philosophy of the XVII and XVIII century. Others who have accepted the idea that the pension is a part of the compensation earned also claim that contributions should be abolished. They believe that the whole question of pensions would be clarified if it were viewed as a part of the wage question, and they sometimes support this idea by quoting the opinions of conservatives who view all questions in the light of the classical economic theory of a hundred years ago. But the liveliest confusion develops there where the idea of pension as a means of improving the efficiency of service comes

to a clash with the idea that it is a means of collective savings and insurance.

The idea that the government benefits from the pensions is pressed forward, strange as it may seem, by the employees, whereas the idea that the employees benefit from it is pushed on by the taxpayers, and sometimes by a government administrator. The reason for this *melée* lies in each side's belief that the other should bear the major part of the cost of the retirement system. It is commonplace that a man engaged in a barter with another usually fears that the bargain will be more to the other man's advantage than to his own. It is evident that this dispute is based more upon bias than upon facts and that its premises, that a retirement system must give preference to the interests of one side or the other, are wrong. The entire experience of pension systems abroad tends to show that of the many unfair discriminations (and their number is legion) against one or the other side in the matter of their contributions and benefits, none is lasting. The tendency of the entire movement as already shown is to consider the mutual interests of the public and the employees. The experience of the recently established sound systems in this country (in Massachusetts) and abroad shows that both sides might progress much more if instead of starting by juggling arguments they would approach the question with open mind, determine what sound benefits would be equally beneficial to each, and then, in a true spirit of cooperation, agree to share equally the cost of a mutually beneficent system.

The two-fold purpose of a retirement system based on a "share alike" principle can thus be stated: on the one hand, to insure the employees and their dependents against want in old age, disability, death and, to some extent, resignation and dismissal, and, on the other, to facilitate the elimination of dead-wood from the service, to attract a better type of

(Continued on page 27)

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Edited by

HENRY R. LINVILLE
Editor-in-Chief

BENJAMIN C. GRUENBERG

Managing Editor
Benjamin Glassberg Sam Schmalhausen
J. EDWARD MAYMAN
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Officers of the American Federation of Teachers

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CHAS B STILLMAN, President
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IDA L M FURMAN, Vice-President
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THE SUPERIOR MERIT FIASCO

WHEN the New York City "equal pay" law for teachers went into effect in 1912, the Board of Superintendents had incorporated as one of the provisions of the law a strict requirement that the salaries of high school teachers should not be advanced beyond the schedule of the ninth year of service until the work of teachers had been approved as "fit and meritorious." The provision also required that teachers should be rated at the twelfth year of service.

For many years the rule of the Department had been that teachers should be approved or disapproved for the ninth and the twelfth year of service; but they had not regarded these milestones as serious ones to pass. Suddenly, however, on the passage of the equal pay law these years became fraught with danger. Some interpreted the superior merit provision as a means by which the superintendents squared accounts as far as possible with those who had aided in the passing of a law which the Department had opposed. Others credited it as a sincere effort to improve the service. Everyone could see that it meant the loss of money to those who were not "approved."

After a trial of four years there has been accumulated enough experience to serve as a basis for the determination of the value of the "superior merit" rule. There is no question about the failure of the rule to improve the service, except in the sense that the heavy whip in the hand of the driver may force the animal to strenuous exertion. But the horse is just the same horse—possibly a little weaker.

The judgments given in the hundreds of cases of high school teachers so far considered have been made upon the same basis that has always characterized supervision in the educational system of New York City—the basis of finding fault. This is never constructive. It is inevitably discouraging, and fruitful of hatred and sus-

picion. Moreover, there is much ground for believing that the superintendents have permitted the superior merit provision to be used as a means of punishment for numerous forms of professional misbehavior, "lack of co-operation," "insubordination," and the like, on the part of teachers who have resented inhuman treatment. Much in the same way does an angry parent threaten with annihilation for screaming a child that has been forced to scream by the original beating.

Latterly the number of approvals for superior merit has been greatly reduced without any assigned reason. Under the stringent financial conditions the suspicion is gaining ground that the opportunity to save money by branding teachers as inferior is being seized by our official superiors.

What, then, becomes of the standards of teaching which the rule is supposed to protect?

Have the superintendents lost standards and shame together?

A LIGHT IS BREAKING

THE Board of Superintendents of New York City has recently issued a statement on a new plan for the selection of principals of high schools. Word has been sent by the Board to the heads of many educational systems thruout the country that three high school principalships are now vacant. Requests are made that the names of worthy candidates be submitted. The high schools in New York itself have been notified of these vacancies. Thus the first step has been taken to make possible the selection of principals who will be worthy of the great trust which the public will lay upon them.

From the candidates who present their cases the most promising are to be selected. These will be asked to visit the schools wherein the vacancies occur, to study the conditions under which the work is done, to report to

the Board their observations, and to offer recommendations for the improvement of conditions, or for carrying on the work of the school, or for any change in its aims, policies and practices. This is a practical device for the discovery of ability. What device the superintendents propose to employ in order to determine "the most promising ones" has not been announced.

The same idea in a more democratic form was outlined in November, 1914, by a member of the staff of THE AMERICAN TEACHER and presented to the Board of Superintendents. The earlier plan would send to the school on a visiting test every candidate who presented himself. Those who are not in the habit of thinking about educational conditions and about the problems that necessarily develop out of the study of conditions would not be candidates. Thus, the city would be saved immediately any additional disgrace in the way of incompetent high school principals.

The new plan as announced by the Board of Superintendents also provides that an additional list of questions on high school organization, teaching, and management, as well as directly on the problems of the particular school visited must be answered within two days of the receipt of the questions by the candidate. After certain requirements of a formal nature are met the committee representing the Board will select five as "approved candidates." These five will be subjected to still further inquiry as to their worthiness.

Of course, the public for whose protection all this new interest is being developed in the selection of fit candidates for the high school principalships knows little or nothing about it all, and would be none the wiser if the plan came to naught. The teachers would know, but they would not dare say anything. So, in order that we

may make as sure as possible of "holding fast all that is given us," we find it necessary to give expression to:

Item 1, One Dark Suspicion

Item 2, One Social Demand

The dark suspicion is that the present Board of Superintendents does not contain material strong enough to guarantee the selection of candidates, free from the personal and political influences to which the superintendents themselves owe their official support and their economic sustenance. But we are not discouraged on that account. We have only to hold this advance in the plan of selecting candidates for the high school places, and then to work for the establishment of a better staff of educational leaders than the Board now is, even if we have to recommend the abolition of that body in order to improve it.

As Item 2, we demand the complete elimination of the discredited system of appointing high school principals whose chief obligation is to the official who nominates them—a system which permits a principal to tyrannize over the teachers and the pupils, to defy sentiments of public decency in the community, and to hold a public trust as a fief granted by an over-lord. We demand the substitution of a system of appointing principals who shall feel their obligation to society—a system which calls for vision to see the social forces that are operating in our midst today, for sympathy to feel the need of helpful leadership for the youth of the land, for intelligence to select the proper educational material and to direct its application to the needs of the children entrusted to their care.

HOWLERS: Vaccination is used to prevent small pox and other small diseases. Aseptic surgery accomplishes the idea of removing or fixing a diseased or hurt part from a person without killing him.

CROSS QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

- Q.** Need a principal be considerate and courteous?
- A.** It all depends. If the principal is addressing his superior officer, by all means. If he is only facing a teacher-in-the-ranks, he need not be. Teachers as a class do not evoke courtesy. They elicit contemptuous indifference. In every stratum of society, whenever a large group of workers behaves servilely, the official superiors behave domineeringly. If you expect your principal to be polite, treat him or her as an equal, not as your overlord. Then observe what happens!
- Q.** Have teachers a "right" to spy on one another?
- A.** Most certainly—if they are catering to the desires of an exacting principal; or if they aspire to official recognition; or if they hate you and your eccentricities. But if the teacher lacks all these incentives to scab-conduct, he will not claim the right to spy. Spies are the martyred traitors to the cause of equality!

PENSION PROBLEM IV.

(Continued from page 24)

employee, to promote *esprit de corps* and to improve generally the efficiency of the service.

Of all solutions of this problem the best one so far advanced is that in which the employees' contributions of a percentage of their salary constitute individual savings accounts which provide them at age 65 to 60, or at disability with a benefit called "annuity." In the same solution the government's contribution provides them on retirement with a benefit of an equal amount, which is termed "super-

annuation allowance" in England, "allocation" in France, and "pension" in the Massachusetts teachers' system and in the proposed system in the City of New York. In the event of the employee leaving the service, he withdraws all his accumulated savings, and his withdrawal cancels the government's obligation to pay him the "allocation" or "pension." So long as the employee remains in the employer's service the two help the realization of each other's purpose, for if the government by adding a "pension" to his "annuity" thereby doubles his protection, the employee on the other hand, by adding his "annuity" to the employer's "pension" thereby doubles the facilities of the government in eliminating the inefficient and improving the service in general. A mutual relationship of tremendous social consequence is thus established between the two.³

[The conclusion of this article, and of the series, will appear in the March number of *THE AMERICAN TEACHER*.]

³ The Massachusetts Board of Education in 1913 stated in support of the state teachers' retirement bill which it prepared and which is now in operation, that "a retirement system designed to advance the efficiency of teaching, while at the same time preserving to the utmost, as far as possible, the self-respect on the part of those participating therein, should be supported in part by contributions from the prospective beneficiaries. Such a system then becomes in effect a form of compulsory insurance against loss of earning power due to old age, towards the cost of which the state makes partial contributions. The board therefore recommends that in any legislation providing for retirement allowances for teachers there be included a provision to the effect that from the salaries of teachers who are benefitted from such allowances there shall regularly be deducted such a percentage as will provide substantially one-half of the retirement allowances called for." (Report to the Legislature, 1913, House No. 1926.)

Every reader of *The American Teacher* should act upon the suggestion of our Washington correspondent, and write to his U. S. Senator and his Representative in Congress urging that justice be granted the teachers in our national capital.

THE FLUOROSCOPE

THE PENETRATING cathode rays make their amusing or startling revelations without fear or favor. This dangerous instrument of research should not be left on tables or low shelves within the reach of children; serious consequences may arise thru inadvertence. We have before us a specimen of self-revelation thrown upon the screen thru the victim's own act. It is a letter from a District Superintendent to the pupils of an elementary school. There are twenty-six District Superintendents in New York City. The reader should bear in mind that the following was written—for publication in a school paper—by only one of them.

III. A Message From a Friend

Your Principal, has asked me to write to you. I do so, with pleasure. I asked her for a topic. She gave me, "Obedience."

My mind always goes back to the Garden of Eden, when I think of obedience. You and I and all mankind, pay the toll of death, because our first parents were not obedient.

I think too, of the tablets of stone, whereon God gave to Moses the Commandments that you and I must observe.

Trouble comes to those who do not observe these ancient laws.

When God told you, for example, to honor your father and mother, He did not burden you with a long discourse on the reasons why you should be obedient to this command.

God knew that you would see a thousand reasons every day for giving obedience and reverence to your parents. And you do see them, and you realize them, even when sometimes, as children will, you forget your duty.

God knew all this, for God is Father too, Father of us all. And the promise of long life is made in this commandment, to those who obey it.

The trouble about obedience I find, is that it is such an old-fashioned habit that some people are tempted to experiment with it. That was what occurred to Adam and Eve. It certainly proved a fatal experiment.

Now I find obedience to be a comfortable, easy habit. In my sphere of life, a little wider than yours, and more like your father's, I have to obey, just as your father obeys. We cannot resist the authority of those who are above us in rank.

I was taught to obey those in authority over me, my parents, my teachers, my superiors, in all that is not sinful. We call that, implicit obedience. Some call it blind obedience. I never bother much about its name—I just try hard to obey. I realize, as you will every day you live, that

Order is Heaven's first law—
And this confessed,
Some are, and must be,
Greater than the rest.

Thinking people do not quibble about obedience. They obey. They do not hesitate for reasons. They act! God tells me for example, to love Him, and to love my neighbor, I do not find anywhere, any authority for first searching out the creed of my neighbor, or his habits, nor may I measure his appearance, nor love him according to his charm of manner.

I must love him! As much as I love myself! That is my command. And I am doing my very best to live up to that command every day with my whole heart, because I know that God directs it, because I know I cannot have God's love if I fail in it, because I know that it will make my neighbor happy, because I am certain that it makes me happy!

I like to visit and see so many children happy there because they have learned the lessons of obedience. All of reverence for parental authority that they have learned at their mother's knee, they bring into their school

and place in tribute before their teachers. It is simple, childlike, sure.

If I am tempted to wander from obedience, obedience to the law of God, obedience to the law of man, many things restrain me—but always I think of a bit of poetry written by a woman, the woman who wrote the wonderful story of "The Burial of Moses."

Speak to these curious hearts of ours,
And teach them to be still!

Your friend,

* * *

THE HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS UNION OF WASHINGTON, D. C.

L. V. LAMPSON, *Correspondent*

The members of our union are very appreciative of the action taken by the Convention in adopting the strong resolutions of protest against the failure of Congress to include the public school teachers of the District of Columbia in the general salary-increase legislation. (See THE AMERICAN TEACHER for January, page 14.)

We earnestly request the readers of THE AMERICAN TEACHER to communicate immediately with their representatives and Senators on the subject. The Senate will take action on the District appropriation bill at an early date. The following brief will explain the situation:

THE PUBLIC SCHOOL EMPLOYEES IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE GENERAL SALARY IN- CREASE LEGISLATION

On December 21, 1916, while the House of Representatives had under consideration the District of Columbia appropriation bill, the subcommittee having charge of the measure reported an amendment extending the 10 and 5 per cent. increases that were voted in the legislative, executive and judicial bill to the employees of the District

other than employees of the public schools, police department, fire department, and employees to whom subsistence is furnished.

The chairman of the subcommittee stated in debate that the public school employees were excluded because the "longevity" feature (yearly increase in salary for a limited number of years) in their salary schedule gives them a raise for next year that practically amounts to the same thing as a 10 and 5 per cent. increase.

An examination of the pay-rolls of all the public school employees clearly demonstrates that this argument is based upon a misconception of the facts. Out of 304 high and normal school teachers, over 250 will receive no longevity increase next year. Out of 284 janitors, not one will receive a single cent of increase for next year. Out of 2,200 public school employees, over 1,000 will receive for next year no increase whatsoever.

(NOTE.—These statements are based upon existing law.)

There Should Be No Discrimination

In the debate in the House on the District bill, the chairman of the subcommittee frequently objected to any discrimination against employees of the District and expressed himself at one point in the following language: "My plea is to treat the employees of the District the same as the employees in the Federal departments in the District of Columbia." (Cong. Rec., page 687.) In view of the fact that over 1,000 of the public school employees receive no longevity increases whatever for next year and, the further fact, that those who do receive such increases are necessarily down in the salary scale, we respectfully submit that to exclude those who are responsible for the educational preparedness of 55,000 children, would be a discrimination which no member of Congress who is in possession of the facts above given would willingly justify.

High Cost of Living

According to the last Annual Report of Secretary Redfield, there was a rise in prices and cost of living of 34 per cent. for the year.

The high cost of living affects the public school employees just as seriously as other

groups of government workers. Teachers must spend many years and several hundreds of dollars, sometimes several thousand dollars, before they can even qualify for positions in the schools. Over a thousand teachers in the public schools receive salaries of less than \$1,000.

The Efficiency of the Working Personnel

The United States Government has been most liberal in its provisions for the physical needs of the public school system. It has not given as much attention to the personnel. The corporations of the country have long since recognized that the efficiency of the working personnel is fully as important as the efficiency of the plant. This is even more true of the public school system, whose product is not goods manufactured for profit, but boys and girls. Schools are possible without school buildings, but schools are not possible without public school employees. The money which comes from the people for increases of this character will go back to them in better citizens and better citizenship.

CENTRAL COMMITTEE FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL EMPLOYEES OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.

NOTE:—This committee is composed of representatives of the high school teachers, grade school teachers, janitors, and clerks. The chairman is W. J. Wallis, vice-president of the High School Teachers' Union.

Special Notice

The dues for the first half year have been paid with gratifying promptness. All members are urged to send in the balance of the yearly dues to Geo. R. Devitt, Treasurer, Western High School. Under the Constitution the School representatives are also authorized to receive dues. The representatives of the various schools are as follows:

Central High, R. A. Maurer.
Eastern High, Miss Daisy I. Huff and J. Armond.
Wilson Normal, Miss Mary Brown.
Technical High, C. W. Rippey.
Western High, Miss Alice Wood.

WHAT THEY SAY

To the Editors, THE AMERICAN TEACHER:

Do you know that in Portland, Oregon, Los Angeles, Calif., and Denver, Colo., cities of the size of Portland, teachers are exchanged with other cities for a period of one year? Wide-awake men or women who wish to make the exchange are selected. Each teacher remains on the payroll of his or her own city. In answer to a questionnaire, the Superintendent of Schools at Portland writes: "The visiting teachers have brought back with them from the cities in which they taught new ideas in education."

Do you like the Plan? Then why not agitate for a similar plan in New York State? Many teachers, weary of remaining in one spot for years, would eagerly grasp a chance to teach in a distant city. The benefits are so apparent, one need not dwell at length upon them.

F. SPER.

ILL ADVISED

To the Editors, THE AMERICAN TEACHER:

In the copy of the resolutions adopted by The American Federation of Teachers at Chicago, as printed on the last page of THE AMERICAN TEACHER for January, I regret to see listed "among the well-known violations of the principle of freedom of speech and opinion" the case of Professor Brewster of Colorado.

It seems to me that before making such a statement the authors of the resolutions should have consulted the findings of the only authoritative and impartial inquiry into the case which has been made—that of the Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure of the Association of University Professors. They would have found a verdict opposite to that to which they have given currency.

I write as one who is concerned about freedom of speech and opinion among teachers. Loosely to assume violations and to make public accusations in the face of the report of a disinterested body of investigators is not to help the cause; it is to damage it.

JOHN DEWEY.

Columbia University.

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